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(SUPPORT BULLETIN 3)

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SB-3

SUPPORT BULLETIN

FOR INFORMATION OF HEADQUARTERS
AND FIELD PERSONNEL

This document is part of an integrated
file. If separated from the file it must be
subjected to individual systematic review.

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PURPOSE

The Support Bulletin, to be published periodically, is designed to keep headquarters and field personnel informed on administrative, personnel, and support matters. The Support Bulletin is not directive in nature but rather attempts to present items which, in general, are of interest to all personnel and, in particular, of interest to those employees occupying various support positions. Suggestions and constructive criticism from both headquarters and field personnel are encouraged.

NOTE: — This bulletin is *for information only*. It does not constitute authority for action and is in no way a substitute for regulatory material.

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SUGGESTIONS PAY DIVIDENDS

The Organization's Suggestion Awards Program is paying dividends — both to the Organization and to individuals. Each suggestion which is approved and put into use is of benefit (tangible or intangible) not only to the Organization, but also to the suggester, since it brings him recognition and, in many cases, a cash award as well. Some good suggestions are complicated and require technical knowledge, but many of the most worthwhile ones are very simple ideas that anyone could have. Ideas for improving efficiency, saving money and manpower, raising morale, etc., can make a really significant contribution to Organization operations. The suggestions described below illustrate the kinds of contributions which have brought cash awards to their suggesters:

a. Standard-size dollies used in the warehouse for moving long lengths of lumber and other comparable items can't be pulled around sharp corners without much turning and backing because of the projection of the material beyond the dolly. This was an irritating problem until someone who had to live with it thought of taking two dollies and fastening them together with two criss-crossed cables. A simple rack (for lumber, etc.) is fastened to each dolly by a single bolt which allows each dolly to swing either way and at the same time keeps the two dollies the same distance apart. By this arrangement, as the lead dolly turns to the right, the following dolly moves to the left and follows in the track of the lead dolly — thus making a sharp turn possible. This suggestion has been in use at the warehouse for some time and has made an easier job of the moving of lengthy equipment and supplies.

b. A proposal has been adopted to use an expendable cardboard container constructed with insulated compartments so that vaccines requiring temperature below freezing and those requiring normal refrigeration can be shipped in the same container. This new cardboard container replaces and has many advantages over the nonexpendable metal-

type box formerly used. It is considerably less expensive, saves perishable materials through the known controlled refrigeration period while en route, is lighter in weight (which saves air freight costs), and is designed so that the top may be removed for re-icing without disturbing the vaccines. Further, this container is flexible in size and can be tailored to fit custom shipments without waste space. This suggestion, too, is already in use and the suggester is to receive a substantial award.

c. Some time ago a young lady employee suggested that the problem of cutout letters on stencils could be solved by using a protective overlay while typing stencils. She suggested using a thin sheet of paper. The evaluators found that a protective, transparent overlay film would do the job best. At the same time, it was recognized that the suggester made a real contribution in calling attention to the problem and suggesting a solution. So the suggester received an award and we now stock protective overlays for cutting stencils.

None of these ideas was difficult; each was suggested as the result of a problem encountered by the suggester. Your suggestions, too, can be of real value!

RECRUITMENT PROBLEMS AHEAD

The Organization's recruitment program today, not counting communications technicians and clerical personnel, is largely confined to the selected recruitment of a relatively small number of junior professional personnel. Notwithstanding the fact that our requirements for additional professional personnel are limited, the overall demand for college graduates is showing its effect. Fortunately, the Organization is young and will not be faced, for some time to come, with the problem of replacing sizable numbers of employees each year because of age, retirement, and other related factors. However,

in view of our high standards and entrance requirements, we are not finding it easy to meet even our present limited needs.

The following table, which compares the number of college graduates by profession with the demand for their services, points up this problem:

Profession	Graduates	Demand
Engineering	30,000	60,000
Science	27,000	50,000
Liberal Arts	80,000	100,000
Business Administration	56,000	75,000
Law	9,000	9,000
Medicine	7,000	14,000
Teaching	96,000	175,000

It is also significant that, even though there has been a sharp increase in our population during the past six years, the largest percentage gain was 31.7 in children 5 to 13 years of age; the second largest gain was in the over-65 category; and the college-age group (18 to 24 years of age), in which the Organization has definite interest, declined by 5.8%. Furthermore, only a small gain of 3.7% occurred in the 25-to-44 age group.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The first two issues of the Support Bulletin made mention of the new Language Development Program. We are pleased to report that all the policies and details have been finalized, and complete information concerning the program may be found in the following issuances:

— The basic regulations prescribing the policy and responsibility for the development of language skill among Organization staff personnel and for the administration of Language Development Awards.

— These notices contain a personal message from the Director to all Organization personnel informing them of his interest, and urging that they participate to the fullest extent of their capabilities.

— These notices prescribe the basis for determining the amounts of awards, establish a schedule of awards by language groups, type of award, type and level of proficiency, and by type of effort made by the individual in achieving his language proficiency.

— These notices contain a list of languages, arranged in three groups, for which differing monetary values have been established.

ADMINISTRATIVE WORKLOAD

A book dispatch recently was sent to all field stations and bases requesting comments and suggestions on ways to reduce administrative burdens. To date, approximately one-third of the stations and bases have replied and about 40 percent of the replies have contained specific suggestions. Many of the suggestions appear to be very worthwhile and offer promise of bringing about the elimination of unnecessary work. All suggestions are being given prompt attention, and stations and bases will be advised of the action taken on their respective proposals.

Even though the request to the field asked for specific comments by a certain date, stations and bases are urged to continuously keep this problem in mind and submit suggestions to headquarters at any time.

ADMINISTRATIVE PLANS

Try as we may here in headquarters, Administrative Plans sometimes contain provisions or requirements which, from a field station's standpoint, are not considered practical or feasible. When this is the case, stations should notify headquarters promptly and request that the plan be amended. Otherwise, it will be assumed that the plan is workable and is being complied with as written.

REGULATORY MATERIAL

The Organization is making a concerted effort to eliminate unnecessary regulatory material, to improve the clarity of issuances, and to reduce the number and volume of regulations through more widespread use of handbooks in disseminating technical and procedural instructions and information.

In the summer of 1956 a revised procedure was established for the guidance of those offices which, because of their functions, were responsible for preparing the majority of the regulatory material issued, i. e., administrative, fiscal, and support activities. This procedure provided for a more adequate system of preliminary screening to insure that the proposed regulatory issuance was necessary, instituted more effective means of controlling and limiting coordination, and placed greater emphasis upon the desirability of using handbooks to disseminate procedural details and instructions.

25X1A The biggest problem encountered to date has been in the development of handbooks. Paragraph 3 of [REDACTED] defines the different types of issuances and, in distinguishing between regulations and handbooks, insofar as procedural material is concerned, states that regulations will contain only *essential procedures*. From a practical standpoint, it has not been possible to establish a hard and fast rule or definition for essential procedures. Consequently, offices drafting regulations have been confronted with a real problem in determining what should go in a regulation and what should go in a handbook.

Suffice it to say that our primary objective is to develop a set of regulations which, stated simply, would enable an employee to read and digest them, and by so doing, have a good understanding of the policies of the Organization, how it is organized, what its responsibilities and authorities are, and information on where to turn for more detailed or procedural instructions. This means, of course, that we must develop more handbooks; the idea being that while *certain* groups of employees are concerned daily with *certain*

procedures and details, they are not all concerned with all of the details. Likewise, many employees are rarely, if ever, concerned with detailed procedures. These points are made only to emphasize the desirability of having a set of regulations which is brief, clear, understandable to all, and not filled with a variety of detailed and sometimes complicated procedural instructions which are of concern to only a few. Another argument in favor of more handbooks is that sheer volume of regulations tends to discourage people from referring to them.

After considering several approaches to the matter of developing more handbooks, it was determined that, rather than attempt to deal with the problem on a piecemeal regulation-by-regulation basis, it would be better to take an entire series and make a project of separating all the detailed procedural and instructional material for inclusion in a handbook. In the meantime, this would not delay the publication of proposed regulations which have been in the mill for some time and which are urgently needed.

SUPPLEMENT TO PERSONAL HISTORY STATEMENT

The Personal History Statement has recently been revised to include material previously obtained from other personnel forms. A special Supplement to the Personal History Statement has been devised to facilitate the reporting and recording of additional qualifications or personal-status changes of on-duty personnel. These Supplements are now being distributed to headquarters employees on the anniversary of their entrance on duty with the Organization to bring their present records up to date. Following this initial survey, the Supplement forms will be available for use at any time but each headquarters employee will be asked to complete an abbreviated version annually. Individuals departing for or returning from field assignments complete these forms as a part of their processing.

The coding system for recording qualifications and personal data is being revised to extend its item coverage and provide more detailed information. These records are becoming increasingly useful tools in implementing programs for the assignment and development of personnel. The importance to each individual of keeping his official record current as to his status and qualifications cannot be overemphasized. The Supplement to the Personal History Statement is the principal means for accomplishing this.

PROTECTION OF FUNDS

DO YOU KNOW . . .

The average age of Organization employees today is 31.7 years. Two years ago it was 34.1 years.

The Organization's ratio of veterans to non-veterans is 53% veterans — 47% nonveterans. Two years ago it was 52% and 48%.

The Organization's ratio of males to females is 61% males — 39% females. Two years ago it was 60% and 40%.

Approximately 98% of those Organization employees eligible, applied for and have been accepted into the Career Staff.

Four hundred and thirty Organization employees had one thousand or more hours of sick leave at the close of the 1956 leave year.

While not conclusive that excessive overtime was the cause, a recent staff study on overtime practices in one area disclosed that excessive overtime was accompanied by a higher than average use of sick leave.

MANAGEMENT TOOLS

PAPERWORK MANAGEMENT

It has been estimated that the Government creates and handles some 25 billion pieces of paper each year and spends 4 billion dollars in the process. It has also been estimated that 255 million dollars of this amount could be saved by greater emphasis on paperwork economy.

The Organization is singularly obligated to practice paperwork economy. Each year we create enough material to fill more than 11,000 4-drawer safes. It would require a file drawer more than 24 miles long to store the records we have in our files today. Much of this volume is justifiable. The growth of the Organization, the nature of our work, and the security measures we must observe have been responsible for much of our large records holdings and high paperwork costs.

Paperwork costs fall logically into two general categories: the cost of creating and processing paper and the cost of filing and storing paper. Substantial savings in both these areas are possible. Records creation and processing costs can be cut by improving the quality and reducing the quantity of forms, reports, correspondence, etc., as well as by simplifying procedures for processing records. These costs are in direct proportion to the costs of keeping records — the more money you spend creating records, the more money you must spend to take care of them.

You can reduce the cost of keeping records not only by closely controlling the cost of creating them but also by controlling filing and storage costs through use of modern, efficient methods for filing current records. Your

office should follow a plan that answers these questions: What should be filed and for how long? Where should files be located? What systems, supplies, and equipment should be used? If it does not, it is unlikely that your office is getting the most out of its filing dollar.

Further savings are possible through the transfer of inactive and semiactive records from costly office equipment and space to inexpensive decentralized Records Center storage at headquarters. The Organization's Records Control Program authorizes such transfers, and specific Records Control Schedules have been developed for most headquarters offices. Look up your schedule, see how it applies to your records, and mark the records retirement dates on your calendar. If you have a records-retirement problem, seek the advice of your Area Records Officer. Remember, Records Center storage is much less costly (in equipment, space, and personnel) than

storage of inactive files in your own office, and documents or whole files can be withdrawn from the Records Center in less than 24 hours, if necessary.

Reduction in paperwork costs requires constant day-to-day judgment and careful attention to the creation of records, their filing, storage, and ultimate disposition. Constant striving to improve the quality and reduce the quantity of our paperwork will produce more efficient operation of the entire Organization and help materially in the fulfillment of our various missions. While much progress has been made, a great deal still remains to be done. The Management Staff is prepared to render service in all aspects of paperwork management from the creation of a record through its life span as an active document to its retirement or destruction. Future issues of the Support Bulletin will present more specific information to help you manage your paperwork program more efficiently and economically.

CIVIL SERVICE RETIREMENT

(This is the third of a series of articles on the liberalized
Civil Service Retirement (CSR) Act.)

NEW HIGHS IN WIDOW AND WIDOWER BENEFITS

Benefits which can be paid to widows and widowers of employees have been boosted to new highs by the CSR law. Also, the cost to a retiree has been sharply cut. It is only 2½ percent on the first 2400 dollars of an annuity, plus 10 percent on any remainder.

In addition, the retiree has the option of applying the discount only to part of his annuity. In either case, the survivor would be paid half of the sum discounted.

For example: Say your annuity is 3000 dollars and you wish to provide the maximum for your survivor. It would be discounted at 2½ percent of 2400 (60 dollars), and 10 percent on the remaining 600 (60 dollars), a total of 120. Your annuity would be 2880 and your survivor would be paid half of your 3000 basic annuity, or 1500 dollars.

But let's say you believe that your spouse could get along on 1000 dollars a year. You'd take the 2½ percent discount on 2000 (50 dollars). Your annuity would be 2950 and your survivor would get half of 2000 (1000 dollars).

This election would have to be made at the time the employee retires, and his decision would be irrevocable.

Benefits to surviving spouses of retirees would continue until death or remarriage. No minimum amounts are guaranteed them.

If you elect survivor benefits and your spouse dies first, the discount will continue in effect. Also, if you remarry, you can't name your new spouse to get survivor benefits.

Formerly, a retiree who elected to provide for his survivor had his annuity reduced by 5 percent of the first 1500, by 10 percent over

1500, and by ¾ of 1 percent for each year his wife was under age 60 when he retired. The new law does not reduce the annuity because of the survivor's age.

The widower of a worker who dies in service will be paid an annuity only if he's incapable of self-support and had been receiving at least half of his support from his wife.

A widow or dependent widower is now eligible for benefits at any age, and as a general rule the payments will be half of the employee's earned annuity. The old law required a widow to be at least 50 to be paid benefits, unless there were children under 18.

An employee who retires now on a deferred annuity at age 62 after only 5 years of service will have the right to elect survivor benefits. Formerly, an employee could retire at age 62 if he had 5 years of service, but 15 years of service was required to provide survivor benefits.

The surviving member of husband-and-wife teams can be paid both retirement and survivor benefits if the legal requirements are met.

CHILDREN'S BENEFITS BOOSTED 150 PERCENT

Benefits for surviving children have been increased an average of 150 percent. However, Congress tightened the law to require that if the employee leaves a spouse, a surviving child must have received "more than half of his support" from the employee to be eligible for payments.

In a case where either a wife or a husband survives, dependent children will be paid the least of: 600 dollars per child; 40 percent of the employee's average salary divided by the

number of children; or 1800 dollars divided by the number of children.

If no wife or husband survives, the dependent children will be paid the least of: 720 dollars per child; 50 percent of the employee's salary divided by the number of children; or 2160 dollars divided by the number of children.

Payments to dependent children will be made (1) until they reach 18, unless they are

incapable of self-support; (2) until they become capable of self-support after 18; or (3) until they marry or die.

Finally, in the case of death of the surviving wife or husband, benefits to surviving children will be recomputed and paid at the higher rate. Also, as a child becomes ineligible for payments, the benefits for any remaining children will be recomputed under the above formula.



Did you know that at least one of every seven persons in your community will be hospitalized sometime this year?

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NOW, premiums may be paid anytime by mail or inter-office mail; at headquarters, you can pay in person between 10:00 a. m. and 3:00 p. m. instead of just during the first 5 work-days of each month. Under certain circumstances, your premiums can be deducted from your salary.

GEHA, Inc.

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